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E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [OIIP](#) [OPRC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PK](#)  
SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: JULY 08, 2008

Summary: Reports on a series of seven bomb blasts that rocked Karachi that killed at least one person and injured more than 40 dominated headlines in all newspapers on Tuesday. Newspapers also highlighted Prime Minister Gilani's condemnation of the blasts in Karachi and the order for "high alert" security in all provinces. The second lead story was a suicide attack on the Indian Embassy in Kabul that killed 41 and wounded 150. Some newspapers highlighted that Foreign Minister Qureshi condemned the bombing in Kabul, saying terrorism negates the very essence of human values. Newspapers gave prominent coverage to Ambassador Patterson's meeting with Awami National Party leader Asfandiyar Wali Khan in Islamabad. Several dailies reported that Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) administration has started symbolic classes on the debris of the demolished Jamia Hafsa to condemn the government's delay in rebuilding the seminary.

Almost all newspapers ran editorials about causes and effects of Sunday's suicide attack in Islamabad. English daily "The News" said it is known that support for militancy exists in many places and is tied in to strong anti-U.S. sentiments. However, the paper also noted that more worrisome still are the reports that those in key places within the establishment do not really wish to see militancy disappear. Likewise, another English language daily, "Dawn," agreed that there are Taliban sympathizers in the establishment, especially the army, and in society too. Conversely, the center-right Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" asserts that the attack seems part of a plan aimed at compelling the government to stop the peace talks with Taliban and intensify the operation. The liberal Urdu daily "Express" noted that such attacks destroy the country's economy by scaring away foreign investors. End Summary.

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News Stories  
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11. "Fear Grips Citizens As Seven Blasts Rock Karachi" "The News" (07/08)

"A series of seven bomb blasts rocked Karachi on Monday, killing at least one person and injuring more than 40, the state-run television reported. Intelligence sources claimed that the criminals wanted to provoke ethnic violence in the city."

12. "President, PM Condemn Blasts" "The News" (07/08)

"President Musharraf and Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Monday strongly condemned the bomb blasts in Karachi. In a statement, the president said the despicable acts of terrorism were a conspiracy against the country and its people. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, who is in Malaysia to attend the sixth D-8 Summit, in a message on Monday asked the nation to forge unity among their ranks and support the democratic government in maintaining law and order. Gilani telephoned Rehman Malik and directed him to put the security on high alert in all the four

provinces."

13. "41 Killed In Strike On India's Kabul Embassy" "Dawn" (07/08)

"Forty-one people, including Indian Military Attach and a Political Counselor, were killed when a suicide bomber rammed an explosives-laden car into India's Embassy here on Monday, officials said. The deadliest attack in Kabul since the 2001 fall of the Taliban also left nearly 150 people wounded."

14. "Pakistan slams Kabul Bombing" "Daily Times" (07/08)

"Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi on Monday condemned the bomb blast outside the Indian Embassy in Kabul in which more than 40 people were killed. 'Pakistan condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations as this menace negates the very essence of human values,' a Foreign Office statement quoted him as saying."

15. "Patterson Discusses FATA With Asfandiyar" "The Post," "The News," "Daily Times" (07/08)

"US Ambassador to Pakistan Anne W. Patterson on Monday met Awami National Party head Asfandiyar Wali Khan and discussed matters related to FATA operation, regional issues and overall political situation of the country. During the meeting in Islamabad both Peterson and Asfandiyar Wali agreed to use other options including negotiations instead of military operation to tackle militancy in the tribal areas."

16. "Jamia Hafsa Restarts Symbolic Classes" "Daily Times" (07/08)

"The Lal Masjid administration on Monday started on-hour symbolic classes to condemn delay in the reconstruction of Jamia Hafsa by the government."

17. "U.S. Condemns Islamabad, Kabul Attacks" "Dawn" (07/08)

"The United States on Monday condemned suicide bombings in Islamabad and Kabul that killed dozens of innocent people and offered to help India investigate the attack on its Embassy in the Afghan capital, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack told a briefing in Washington. Earlier, the White House issued a stronger condemnation of the bombing in Pakistan that killed 20 people, called it a 'needless act of violence' and vowed to help Islamabad fight 'this common enemy,' White House National Security spokesman Gordon Johndroe said."

18. "Pakistan Next U.S. President's Big Challenge" "Dawn" (07/08)

"U.S. President George Bush has said that the biggest challenge for the next President of the United States would be Pakistan and not Iraq or even Afghanistan, according to a report in the U.S. News and World report on Monday."

19. "USAID Expands \$90m National Education Support Program In Sindh" "The News" (07/08)

"The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Sindh Department of Education and Literacy signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Monday to expand the USAID's nationwide \$90 million ED-LINKS program in Sindh."

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Editorials/Op-eds  
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110. "Another Day Of Horror," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (07/08)

"Disturbingly, there is as yet little proof that this war is being won. Indeed, militants seem to be expanding their hold on wider and wider tracts of the country. While the Lal Masjid's prayer leader has condemned the bombing, it is known that support for militancy exists in many places and is tied in to strong anti-U.S. sentiments. More worrying still are the reports that those in key places within the establishment do not really wish to see militancy disappear. At present, it seems, the country's security forces have no means at their disposal to tackle suicide bombers - and this can only mean

the threat of further such attacks lurks almost everywhere in the country."

¶11. "Blast In Islamabad," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (07/08)

"The authorities are still clueless as to who was behind Sunday's devastating blast in Islamabad. Does the government feel inhibited in its actions from within? It cannot be denied that the situation is full of contradictions. There are Taliban sympathizers in the establishment, especially the army. In society, too, powerful sections - even though in a minority and utterly indifferent to the nation's long-term interests - tacitly approve of this bloodletting. But then the government has no choice but to make an obvious decision to fight this rebellion."

¶12. "Islamabad Tragedy," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 125,000) (07/07)

"The involvement of intelligence agencies of Afghanistan and our enemy India in this tragedy cannot be ruled out as they already accuse us of alleged terrorism, thus paving the way for the U.S. to achieve its aggressive designs against our sovereignty.... This attack seems part of a plan aimed at compelling the government to stop the peace talks [with the Taliban] and intensify the operation."

¶13. "Islamabad Suicide Attack: A Conspiracy To Weaken Pakistan," an editorial in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (07/08)

"Although there is no similarity between the two suicide attacks [in Kabul and Islamabad], this is certain, if there is one country on which international and U.S. pressure will increase, it will be Pakistan.... Such attacks destroy the country's economy by scaring away not only foreign investors but also foreign sports teams, like Cricket."

¶14. "Need To Address Causes Of Suicide Attacks," an editorial in the leading mass circulation centrist Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (07/08)

"We should understand the intentions, and interests of big powers regarding their opposition to the peace treaties between the government and the local tribes. These big powers can target our tribesmen just to guard their national interests. Today, we have positioned one-hundred thousands troops at Pak-Afghan border for the sake of the U.S.-led war on terror. In spite of that the security situation is still precarious, therefore we must comprehend the gravity of the state of affairs, and any delay can pose serious threats to our national interests, and sovereignty."

¶15. "Suicide Attack In Islamabad," an editorial in the Peshawar-based Urdu-language daily "Mashriq" (cir. 55,000) (07/08)

"The government officials must know that a suicide attack is the most difficult task for an individual to execute, so they must identify the causes that why are the young people of this country ready to lay their lives through suicidal attacks? It is not an easy job to persuade, and convince the youth to 'sacrifice' their lives either. We must address the grievances of people and protect them from the clutches of fanatics who are deceiving them."

¶16. "Another Suicide Attack In Islamabad," an editorial in the popular rightist Urdu-language daily "Ausaf" (cir. 10,000) (07/08)

"The peaceful Lal Masjid Shuada Conference shows that religious workers and religious-minded people are not terrorists. And it is duty of the administration to apprehend terrorists, and it cannot recoil from its responsibility by saying that suicide attacks cannot be stopped anyway. A good strategy can help stop suicide attacks, however a common policeman cannot deal with this menace. The Government has to station anti-terrorist personnel where there is likelihood of suicide attacks."

¶17. "Lal Masjid's Issues Must Be Resolved Immediately," an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir.

15,000) (07/08)

"It is the duty of the new government to rebuild the demolished Jamia Hafsa (girls school) next to Lal Masjid, resume schooling at Jamia Faridia (boys wing), and set free Maulana Abdul Aziz to lessen tension in the area. If the bomb blast in Islamabad was really a suicide attack, as was claimed by the government, this situation is alarming."

¶18. "It Is Possible To Get Rid Of Suicide Attacks," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal Urdu daily "Aaj Kal" (circ. 5000) (07/08)

"All political leaders must forget their differences, cooperate with the government, and tell their constituents that these suicide attacks are not jihad, in fact they negate the very principles of Islam. They also need to tell the public that these terrorists are targeting only Muslims, not Americans or non-Muslims."

¶19. "Suicide Attack In Islamabad," an editorial in the Lahore-based populist center-right Urdu daily "Khabrain" (cir. 50,000) (07/08)

"If the Foreign Minister is right in saying that this [suicide attack] is retaliation for the operation [in Khyber Agency], the government must adopt the path of talks, instead of using force."

¶20. "A Wake Up Call," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (07/08)

"The administration currently faces pressure from Washington, which opposes talks with the militants. The militants on the other hand demand a total break with pro-U.S. policies. There are complaints from the NWFP government that the establishment creates hurdles in the implementation of peace accords. What is paramount however is to get all policy decisions approved from the National Assembly?"

¶21. "Suicide-Bombing Is Predictable And Preventable," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (07/08)

"Needless to say, more of the same is coming. The question is: is the PPP government willing to fight or does it want to let the Al Qaeda-Taliban network win? It has sent the army into the Tribal Areas and must now stand firm even if that means political isolation and bad footage from the TV channels who are brave only as long as they don't ruffle the feathers of the terrorists. Suicide-bombers are going to spare all the elements opposed to the PPP and zero in on its supporters. It is time for Mr. Zardari to bite the bullet and do the right thing till it is time for Al Qaeda to go."

¶22. "Why Taliban Target Army And Police?," an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (07/08)

"Still there are people who believe that Americans and Indian intelligence agencies were trying to create problems for Pakistan with a view to undermining its political and economic strength. By sponsoring such attacks, which are invariably linked to Taliban, they want Pakistani authorities to wage the war on terror with more vigor, rather vengeance. If Taliban are behind the tragedy, then question arises as to why they make Army and Police Force their target. Obviously, it is because these are symbols of the State and by making them target they want to send a clear message that it is in retaliation to the flawed policy on campaign against terror. There is a strong perception that the authorities are doing all this at the behest of the United States."

¶23. "Vicious Attack," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (07/08)

"The past incidents of suicide bombings have proven that ordinary ways of maintaining law and order are simply inadequate to confront the hydra of terrorism. There is no room for slackness. The vicious suicide attack in the capital was followed by a series of blasts in Karachi the next day. It further demonstrates the gravity of the situation. The only remedy against terrorism is coming down hard on the terrorists."

¶24. "Yet Again Blast In Islamabad," an editorial in the

Karachi-based right-wing pro-Jamaat-e-Islami Urdu daily "Jasarat" (cir. 3,000) (07/08)

"The suicide attack seems to be a reaction to the Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) operation in which hundreds of people were killed last year. There is a possibility that a relative or a buddy of some of the victims had done this. But this is not fair, as these policemen were not involved in the operation against Lal Masjid. If General Musharraf committed a mistake, then the suicide attacker has committed the same crime."

¶25. "Terrorism In Islamabad And Karachi: Who Will Protect Innocent Citizens?," an editorial in independent liberal Sindhi daily Kawish (cir. 105,000) (07/08)

"Blast in Islamabad has left again the people of Pakistan with a sense of insecurity and fear. The government is helpless in preventing these attacks. No doubt, the present government has inherited this volatile law and order situation; therefore it is not justified to force it to improve the state of affairs immediately. However, we hope that the government will make an effective strategy so that innocent people can live in protected environment."

¶26. "Shaken By Violence," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (07/08)

"The fact that militants struck in the capital that has been largely spared random bomb attacks, points to the Karzai government further losing control over the situation. The attack on the Indian Embassy may again trigger the same old blame game but it will hardly help Kabul contain the deepening resentment among its own people against increasing civilian casualties in coalition air strikes."

¶27. "Return Of The Suicide Bomber," an op-ed by Anjum Niaz in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (07/08)

"Becoming angry, emotional and playing to the galleries is the easiest thing for some security analysts. Instead of attacking people like Rehman Malik for having failed to prevent suicide attacks, we should be attacking the root of the evil. No Pakistani analyst worth his salt has the guts to blame these people who run the camps that train and indoctrinate these youths. We all know who these outfits are but like the NWFP government prefers to zip up instead of being bumped off by these crazy people who have successfully infiltrated into our environs and have threatened death should they be exposed."

¶28. "Appeal By Eve's Daughter," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 125,000) (07/08)

"It is unfortunate that our Foreign Office, instead of freeing this hapless female prisoner from American beasts [at Bagram Airbase], has expressed ignorance about the incident altogether.... What does Mian Shahbaz Sharif say about this issue? Can he not ask his coalition partners to pay attention to this matter?"

¶29. "Painful Revelation By British Journalist." an editorial in the Lahore-based independent Urdu daily "Din" (circ. 10,000) (07/08)

"Even if this Pakistani woman is a criminal in America's view, how can the American troops talk about restoring peace in the world after subjecting this woman to such torture and inhuman treatment? Our national honor was laid to rest the moment we handed over this woman to American forces. Yvonne Ridley has presented the facts, it is now up to the Pakistan government to talk with U.S. authorities and seek her release."

¶30. "Hapless Pakistani Female Prisoner At Bagram," an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (07/08)

"The government must formally ask the U.S. to release this hapless woman, who has been thrown in the Bagram prison for men and who has apparently lost her sanity. We are thankful to Yvonne Ridley who felt the pain of a Pakistani woman and came to this country to shake us up."

¶31. "We Know, Mr. Boucher Sir, We Know," an op-ed by Kamran Shafi

in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily  
"Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (07/08)

"Don't you lecture us please, sir, on what our problems are. Also,  
will you kindly desist from telling us to go easy on Musharraf  
because we have 'Other' problems to deal with too, and leave to us  
Pakistanis to decide which of our problems are to be sorted out  
first?"

¶32. "Aid & Pakistan's Development," an op-ed by Shahid Javed Burki  
in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily  
"Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (07/08)

"A significant share of the total amount of external capital that  
flowed into Pakistan came from the United States' budget and from  
the institutions over which Washington had considerable influence.  
What lies in Pakistan's future? Now that the United States is  
developing some misgivings about Pakistan's contribution to the 'war  
on terrorism' there is the possibility that American aid may decline  
once again. Should that happen, what would be the impact on the  
Pakistani economy?"

Patterson